



## NEWS RELEASE

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# YELLOWSTONE AND THE WEST

## THE CHROMOLITHOGRAPHS OF THOMAS MORAN

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EXHIBITION GALLERIES ALSO FEATURE INSTALLATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE WEST,  
PUBLIC CONSERVATION OF THOMAS MORAN'S PAINTING *THE PEARL OF VENICE*

(Omaha, NE) — Joslyn Art Museum presents *Yellowstone and the West: The Chromolithographs of Thomas Moran*, an exhibition celebrating a landmark nineteenth-century publication about the American West and showcasing what is now regarded as perhaps the finest example of chromolithography ever produced. The exhibition is on view at Joslyn beginning June 7 and continuing through September 7, and is included in free general Museum admission.

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### About *Yellowstone and the West*

In 1876, the publisher Louis Prang issued a portfolio of fifteen chromolithographic reproductions of watercolors by Thomas Moran titled *The Yellowstone National Park*. With exquisitely-printed images by an artist renowned for his monumental paintings of the West, and a text by the famous geologist Ferdinand Vandiveer Hayden – who called the portfolio a “just subject for national pride” – Moran and Prang capitalized on the recent establishment of Yellowstone as the first national park and the public's growing fascination with western landscape.

Born in England in 1837, Moran emigrated to the United States with his family when he was seven years old, and apprenticed as an engraver and painter in his teens. An 1871 excursion to the Yellowstone region with Hayden, leader of a U.S. Geological Survey in the western territories, proved a turning point for the artist. Captivated by the hot springs, geysers, and colorful geography of the region, Moran catapulted to fame the following year when Congress purchased his monumental painting, *The Grand Cañon of the Yellowstone* (1872), to hang in the Capitol in Washington, D.C. By the time of his death in 1926, Moran was intimately linked with Yellowstone and had created thousands of oil paintings, watercolors, drawings, and prints of the West.

Highly-detailed color prints that rival the oil paintings and watercolors on which they are based, chromolithographs were tremendously popular in the nineteenth century. Thought to be the most democratic art form, they allowed anyone to acquire well-made reproductions of famous artworks to hang in their home. The vibrancy and accuracy of Prang's chromolithographs proved a faithful compliment to Moran's original watercolors, and helped spread the artist's new-found fame even further.

Alongside *The Yellowstone National Park* portfolio, the exhibition features drawings and watercolor sketches Moran made in the field on his first trip to the West, highly-finished watercolors produced upon return to his studio, and photographs by William Henry Jackson, who worked side-by-side with Moran throughout Yellowstone. Illuminating the rich visual history of the West, the vistas found in this remarkable portfolio remain familiar to this day, a reminder of Thomas Moran's and Louis Prang's lasting achievement and influence.

*Yellowstone and the West: The Chromolithographs of Thomas Moran* was organized by the Joslyn Art Museum Durham Center for Western Studies and Denver Art Museum's The Petrie Center for Western American Art. The exhibition is based on Joni L. Kinsey's publication *Thomas Moran's West: Chromolithography, High Art, and Popular Taste*, which has recently been reprinted by Joslyn Art Museum and the Denver Art Museum. The book is available in Joslyn's Hitchcock Museum Shop (\$45; Joslyn member price: \$40.50).

### Photographs of the West by William Sutton

Complementing the exhibition *Yellowstone and the West: The Chromolithographs of Thomas Moran* is an installation titled *The Lure of Public Land: Photographs of the West by William Sutton*. Over the past three decades, photographer William Sutton has documented public lands throughout the West, surveying the vast expanse of open



land between Canada and Mexico, from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific Ocean. He did not, however, confine his tripod within the familiar and accessible boundaries of the national parks; instead, the majority of Sutton's photographs were made on lands under the control of the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Forest Service. Home to roads, logging, mining, and grazing, as well as recreation, they comprise over 90 percent of federal land in the West and their use is the most complex and contested. Sutton's photographs convey a hopeful view of the landscape while also suggesting the challenges of environmental conflicts, the multiple demands placed on limited resources, and the history of settlement and development. In the end, however, Sutton also describes a tightly-bound connection to the western landscape and the still-powerful draw of a distant vista: "The public lands are legacies of the ever-changing frontier, and within them can be found wild lands, and within those wild lands is a psychological and spiritual horizon."

The installation *The Lure of Public Land* is organized by Joslyn's Durham Center for Western Studies to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act. William Sutton's book *At Home in the West: The Lure of Public Land* is available in Joslyn's Hitchcock Museum Shop (\$50, Joslyn member price: \$45).

#### In-Gallery Conservation of Moran's *The Pearl of Venice*

Although Thomas Moran is most closely associated with his paintings of the American West, Venice became another important subject following trips there in 1886 and 1890. A major center for American artists including James McNeill Whistler and William Merritt Chase, Venice's shimmering light and captivating architecture offered



Moran a new kind of romanticism. *The Pearl of Venice* (1899) has long been a favorite of Joslyn visitors, who will now have a remarkable opportunity to observe the cleaning and conservation treatment of this painting in the Museum's exhibition galleries by Kenneth Bé, paintings conservator at the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center. Visitors will watch as the luminous beauty of Moran's masterpiece re-emerges.

Public conservation hours are Tuesdays, 2–4 pm and Thursdays, 4–6 pm, June 10 through September 4, and Saturday, August 2, 1–3 pm. No conservation Tuesday, June 24, or Thursday, June 26. Hours/dates subject to change. Visitors should confirm the schedule at [www.joslyn.org](http://www.joslyn.org).

The conservation of *The Pearl of Venice* has been made possible through the generous support of Holland Foundation. This project is a joint partnership between Joslyn Art Museum and the Nebraska State Historical Society, which operates the Gerald R. Ford Conservation Center.

### Mobile Moran – Art Rocks!

Art and science meet as guests learn about geology topics including volcanoes, color, temperature, waterfalls, and glaciers while viewing *Yellowstone and the West*. Students in Shelley Brown's seventh grade science class at Our Lady of Lourdes and University of Nebraska at Omaha students in Harmon Maher's plate tectonics seminar, working with Green Door Labs, have created five Edventures (scavenger hunt-like games using a web-enabled device) to help visitors discover geological themes in Thomas Moran's chromolithographs.

Free Wi-Fi is available in all Joslyn galleries. Guests should bring a web-enabled mobile device or borrow one of Joslyn's (free of charge, valid driver's license required) to access the exhibition Edventures (access instructions available at the entrance to the exhibition).

Edventures at Joslyn are presented in partnership with the University of Nebraska at Omaha Service Learning Academy. Powered by the Edventure Builder by Green Door Labs.



### Exhibition Related Events and Programs

#### *Members-only Preview*

Friday, June 6 @ 6 pm (doors open at 5:30 pm)

On Friday, June 6, Joslyn members will enjoy a preview of *Yellowstone and the West: The Chromolithographs of Thomas Moran*. At 6 pm, Toby Jurovics, Joslyn's chief curator and Holland Curator of American Western Art, will give an overview of the exhibition followed by gallery viewing, complimentary light hors d'oeuvres, and a cash bar. Invitations were mailed to all Joslyn members. Others interested in attending may join Joslyn online at [joslyn.org](http://joslyn.org).

#### *Public Presentation & Discussion: The Lure of Public Land*

Saturday, June 7; 1–3 pm

Free admission

Artists have shaped our understanding of the western landscape from Karl Bodmer in the 1830s to the photographs of Ansel Adams. Join us for an afternoon of conversation ranging from Thomas Moran and the establishment of Yellowstone as the first national park to the challenges of the contemporary West. Speakers include Thomas Brent Smith, director of the Petrie Institute of Western American Art, Denver Art Museum; photographer William Sutton; and Harris Sherman, former under secretary for natural resources and environment at the USDA. A discussion moderated by Mace Hack, state director of The Nature Conservancy, and Toby Jurovics, Joslyn's chief curator and Holland Curator of American Western Art, will follow. This event is presented by Joslyn's Durham Center for Western Studies in partnership with The Nature Conservancy.



*Curator Gallery Talk*

Thursday, July 17 @ 6:30 pm (cash bar @ 5 pm)

Free admission

This evening talk by Toby Jurovics, Joslyn's chief curator and Holland Curator of American Western Art, offers visitors the chance to take a closer look at the exhibition.

*Public Talk: Joni L. Kinsey on Thomas Moran*

Sunday, August 24 @ 2 pm

Free admission

Noted Moran scholar Joni L. Kinsey will discuss her book *Thomas Moran's West: Chromolithography, High Art, and Popular Taste*, which has recently been reprinted by Joslyn's Durham Center for Western Studies and Denver Art Museum's Petrie Center for Western American Art (available in Joslyn's Hitchcock Museum Shop: \$45; Joslyn member price, \$40.50; University Press of Kansas). A widely respected scholar of American Art, Kinsey is professor of art history at the University of Iowa. She is also the author of *Thomas Moran and the Surveying of the American West* and *Plain Pictures: Images of the American Prairie*.

*Additional Programs*

Many of Joslyn's regularly scheduled programs will feature *Yellowstone and the West*-inspired themes this summer. Visit [joslyn.org](http://joslyn.org) for complete details.

- *Saturday Surprise!* (Saturdays, July 12 and 26, 10 am–noon): free drop-in art-making program (activity hint: Yellowstone Adventure)
- *Story Adventures* (Tuesday, July 15 @ 10:30 am): free drop-in gallery reading program (theme: Parks)
- *Stroller Tours* (Wednesday, July 16 @ 9:15 am): focusing on *Yellowstone and the West*; this program for adults with small children requires advance registration online and payment at the door; free for Members and infants/toddlers; \$5 for General Public Adults)
- *Art Encounters* (Thursday, July 17 @ 10:30 am): focusing on William Sutton's photographs of the West; free for all adults; presented in partnership with The Nebraska Medical Center's Health and Wellness Club
- *Kids Can Do Art* (free during all public hours): a station for self-guided art-making, focusing this summer on landscapes and *Yellowstone and the West*

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**PICTURED (PAGE 1):** Thomas Moran (American, 1837–1926), *The Grand Cañon of the Yellowstone, Yellowstone National Park* from *The Yellowstone National Park, and the Mountain Regions of Portions of Idaho, Nevada, Colorado and Utah* published by Louis Prang and Company, ca. 1876, chromolithograph on paper, Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska, Gift of Gail and Michael Yanney and Lisa and Bill Roskens, 2001.40.8; **(PAGE 3, TOP TO BOTTOM):** William S. Sutton (American, b. 1956), *Desert View Point, Grand Canyon National Park, Arizona*, 1980, ink jet print, © William Sutton; Thomas Moran (American, born England, 1837–1926), *The Pearl of Venice*, 1899, oil on canvas, Joslyn Art Museum, Omaha, Nebraska, Gift of Mary McArthur Holland, Betty McArthur Heller, and Mickey McArthur, 1982.6



**Our Mission** – Joslyn Art Museum collects, preserves, and interprets the visual arts of the highest quality, fostering appreciation and enjoyment of art for the benefit of a diverse audience.  
**Our Vision** – To be cherished and respected as a premier art museum.

The Museum was a gift to the people of Omaha from Sarah Joslyn in memory of her husband, George, who made his fortune as president of the Western Newspaper Union. The Museum's original 1931 building is one of the finest examples of Art Deco architecture in the nation, with 38 types of marble from seven countries. The Walter and Suzanne Scott Pavilion, a 58,000-square-foot addition built in 1994, was designed by renowned British architect Norman Foster as his first U.S. commission. The Museum features galleries, a 1,000-seat concert hall, fountain court, education technology gallery, lecture hall, classrooms, sculpture garden, café, and shop.

General Museum Admission: Free (additional charge for some special exhibitions; all exhibitions noted in this release are included in free general Museum admission).

Regular Museum Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, 10 am–4 pm; Thursday, 10 am–8 pm; closed Monday and major holidays.

[www.joslyn.org](http://www.joslyn.org) | (402) 342-3300 | 2200 Dodge Street | Omaha, NE 68102